REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are all the claims pending in this application. Claims 1 and 6 have been amended and claims 25 and 26 have been canceled. Claims 1 and 6 have been amended to incorporate claims 25 and 26, respectively, and to include additional recitations. Support for amended claims 1 and 6 can be found, for example, at pages 19, line 20 to page 26, line 12, page 74, line 15 to page 77, line 9 of the present specification and in Figures 1 and 2 of the present application.

Entry of the above amendments is respectfully requested.

In addition, consideration of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

A feature of the present invention is that printed matter is obtained by forming a multi-color image by an ink jet system and the image is strengthened by thermal fixation.

None of the prior art references cited by the Examiner teaches nor suggests the above-described concept of the present invention.

Tamura et al. discloses drying of a solvent and the like (such as organic solvents, water content, etc.) after image formation.

In contrast, the present invention employs a thermal fixation step. This thermal fixation step, which my be employed together with a drying step, is different from the drying step as used in Tamura et al. The invention of Tamura et al. is directed to an ink jet recording system that forms an image through a drying step without requiring developing and fixing steps. Therefore, Tamura et al. does not disclose the concept or suggest the use of thermal fixation as employed in the present invention.

In addition, the use of a cooling fan as disclosed in Higuchi et al. is completely different from the thermal fixation used in the present invention.

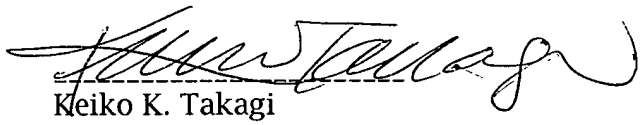
In the present invention, the resin components in the ink are melted by heat and then firmly fixed (thermally fused) onto the medium surface by the thermal fixing member. More specifically, the thermal fixing member of the present invention is a member that fixes an image by applying both heat and pressure thereto. Since Higuchi et al. discloses the use of cooling fan, not a thermal fixing member, Higuchi fails to teach or suggest the present invention.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is not taught or suggested by the references cited by the Examiner.

Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of this application are hereby respectfully requested. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Keiko K. Takagi
Registration No. 47,121

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037-3213
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

Date: November 22, 2002

APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

The claims are amended as follows:

1. (amended) An ink jet printing method which comprises:

directly forming an image on a printing medium on the basis of signals of image data; and

fixing the image by heating to produce a printed matter,

wherein:

said image formation is carried out by an ink jet system of ejecting an oily ink by an electrostatic field;

said image formation on the printing medium is carried out by sequentially using two or more inks; and

each of said inks comprises at least a coloring material and a resin component.

6. (amended) An ink jet printing apparatus comprising:

an image-forming member which directly forms an image on a printing medium on the basis of signals of image data; and

an image-fixing member [which fixes] for fixing the formed image to obtain a printed matter, comprising a heating member,

wherein:

said image-forming member comprises an ink jet imaging unit comprising [an] at least two ink jet [head] heads for ejecting [an] at least a first and a second oily ink, respectively, which may be the same or different by an electrostatic field;

formation of said image on the printing medium is carried out by sequentially using two or more inks; and

each of said inks comprises at least a coloring material and a resin component.